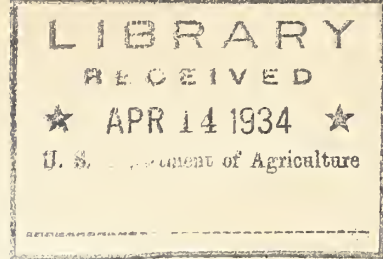


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FORESTS AND RECREATION

Radio address by L. F. Kneipp, Assistant Forester in charge of the Branch of Lands, U. S. Forest Service, in the National Farm and Home Hour, Friday, March 30, 1934.

Man's remote ancestors may or may not have been arboreal in character, but modern man, and his wife and children, generally has a strong love of forests. To his great-grandfather the forest may have been something to be conquered, so that fields might be tilled, or enemies denied the opportunity for surprise attack, but to Mr. 1934 the forest is a haven of sweet peace, of happy idleness, or of forms of outdoor activity that heal the spirit and rejuvenate the flesh. In his office and home, life may be filled with every conceivable convenience; nevertheless, his thought and fancy, despite all efforts at control, strays to some cool glade, or wind-swept peak; or rippling stretch of water, so often as to threaten his peace of mind and his business efficiency. Particularly is this true about the time when the jonquils and tulips are just peeping through the soil, and the young leaves on the elms are the size of squirrel ears.

When this mood possesses a man, the means of satisfying it becomes an acute problem. Aside from questions of finances and leisure time, the most difficult problem frequently is where to find the right place to go to.

In the old days and ways, forests were numerous and people generally were welcome to enjoy them. But times change, and so do the forests, and so do the attitudes of the people who own or control them. Forests rich in the natural beauties have become relatively rare, and where they exist, the right to visit them sometimes is denied by their owners, or is subject to heavy charge. Only in the publicly owned forests is the general public certain of a cordial welcome and the freedom to enjoy them.

There are numerous State forests and State parks that nature-hungry can visit, and there are National Parks and National Monuments which embody the superlative in natural beauty or in archeological or historic interest. But they are all too few and too small for 125 million people to move around in comfortably or for satisfying periods of time. As the years pass, and as the spiritual and economic consequences of wholesome outdoor recreation are better established and recognized, there will be more State Forests and Parks and more National Parks and Monuments, but we are talking now of 1934 rather than of the future.

Well then -- what about the National Forests? They embrace almost 7 1/2 percent of the area of the continental United States, distributed throughout 30 different States; they cover 141 million acres of land, not counting the areas in Alaska or Puerto Rico. Dotting the map in an irregular pattern, they mark the locations of the White Mountains, the Green Mountains, the Appalachians, the Ozark Plateau, the Rockies, the Continental Divide, the Uinta Range, the Sierra Nevadas, the Cascades, and the lesser upthrusts of the crust of the earth into altitudes where abundant moisture and cool temperatures foster the growth of trees. They also mark parts of the great Southern Pine Belt and of the once great forest area of the northern Lake States, with its

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myriads of tree-fringed lakes and waterways. Within their borders the tree growths range from pine to palm, the zones from semi-tropical to hudsonian.

Except occasionally during brief periods of extreme fire danger and in areas of extreme fire risk, the people of the United States are welcome in the National Forests. And well they know it. They visit our Forests by the millions, and the number increases year by year.

Their inclination is not difficult to explain. To the lover of the outdoors, the forests offer the entire range of natural interest and beauty. Great sweeps of forest are broken by inspiring mountain ranges and compelling peaks, by canyons and chasms, by lakes and streams, by grassy parks and meadows. Sadly enough and all too frequently they also are broken by expanses of burned lands and wide areas of timber killed by attacks of insects or disease. But in one National Forest or another every outdoor taste can be satisfied. Pic-nicking, camping, fishing, hunting, mountaineering, botanizing, berry picking, hiking, horseback riding, swimming, boating, all are available, with no requirement other than the avoidance of damage to the Forest, and observance of State game laws and sanitary regulations. Public use of the National Forests is free and informal and devoid of fuss and feathers or burdensome restrictions.

Within the National Forests there are 70,000 miles of roads and 135,000 miles of trails. Nevertheless there are many large areas where there are no roads at all and none too many trails for even the traveler who wants to rough it. In addition to the numerous resorts and summer homes on privately owned lands, there are over one thousand resorts and camps and over ten thousand summer homes on National Forest lands, under permits for which reasonable annual charges are collected. At the close of 1932, there were about 2,000 free public campgrounds at least partially equipped with necessary facilities for sanitation and fire prevention; and since that time the Civilian Conservation Corps has improved several hundred more. Wherever necessary, business and enterprises furnishing the public with needful supplies, equipment, and services are allowed under permit, so that only the venturesome souls that leave the beaten paths and strike into the back country are far from sources of supply or service.

But there are many folks in the United States who detect a discordant note in any reference to roads or supply points or resorts or summer homes. They want their nature in the raw, pure and unadulterated, so that they may pit their endurance and skill in woodcraft against the same obstacles that were met and conquered by the early pioneers. This is a perfectly laudable desire, which will do much to preserve the traditions and characteristics of our pioneer era, and it is so recognized by the United States Forest Service. To meet that need, 64 so-called "Primitive Areas" containing 9 1/2 million acres have been established, and in these areas there will be a studied intent to keep to the minimum any modification of natural conditions. No roads will be built, except in the rare case where fire hazards create need for a low-standard road to move fire-fighters and supplies. No resorts or summer homes will be authorized. So far as practicable the Forest Service will keep these areas in a primitive condition, so that folks who want to know what the old West looked like may in some reasonable degree satisfy their curiosity.

Make the National Forests your next summer's playground. The Forest Service will be glad to see you!!

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